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## **Disaster Hot Line Launched for Triangle Cultural Organizations**

The Triangle Area Cultural Resources Emergency Network (TACREN) announces the launch of a disaster hot line for area cultural organizations to call when a disaster damages their collections.

TACREN is a network of institutions and individuals who pledge to work together to protect the cultural heritage of the Triangle area (Wake-Durham-Orange counties) by providing disaster response assistance and/or support for one another. Members of TACREN also provide support to area cultural organizations in disaster planning, disaster response, and building relationships with area first responders.

Cultural institutions in Wake, Durham, and Orange counties are invited to call (919) 561-1702 for advice and help when their heritage collections are damaged by fire, water, or a natural disaster such as hurricane, tornado, or earthquake. Callers to the hotline can talk with volunteers from TACREN for advice on how to proceed in disaster response and recovery.

Professional conservators and staff from libraries, archives, museums, and historic sites formed TACREN in response to recent reports, such as Heritage Preservation's *Public Trust at Risk*, which outlined dangers to heritage collections, and in response to recent disasters throughout the state.

Disasters can take many forms, such as the 1998 fire at the Thomas Wolfe Memorial State Historic Site that destroyed 15 percent of the site's artifact collection, or the floods from Hurricane Floyd that devastated Princeville. Though most people think of disasters as stemming from hurricanes, tornadoes, or fires, even a water main break can be devastating to a cultural organization.

"It is so important for cultural institutions and professionals in the Triangle to work together to safeguard our heritage," said Sarah Koonts, chair of the TACREN steering committee and head of the Collections Management Branch at the North Carolina State Archives. "Working together we can assist each other in being better prepared to respond to disasters involving our collections."

TACREN was formed with guidance and funding from the North Carolina Preservation Consortium through a grant from Heritage Preservation and its Alliance for Response program.

To learn more about TACREN, please visit the web page <http://www.ncpreservation.org/TACREN.html> or contact Sarah Koonts at (919) 807-7339 or sarah.koonts@ncdcr.gov.